

What is the book about?....it is about moving and thinking and the process of developing the ideas, the skills and a personal philosophy on coaching and playing this beautiful game.

Why should you buy this particular book?....because it examines how to develop from the inexperienced but ambitious coach everyone starts out as, to one who can successfully manage their coaching practice and win matches and championships.

What elements are discussed?.....building a sense of trust with the players.....understanding the design and structure of performance development drills....the phases and systems of play....the importance of the role of the setter....the management of competition....

Who is the book aimed at?....the targeted audience includes coaches, teachers, players, parents and anyone who has an interest in volleyball.

Why have I written this book?....to share the enthusiasm and insights I have gained in 40+ years' experience of building successful teams and developing National Team players.... because I have a huge amount of experience of coach education and development.... because I believe that I have something of value to add to the discussions that are taking place on the role and the substance of being a successful coach.

Thomas Dowens MBE began his coaching career working with a high school team. This school team became Su Ragazzi VC, who established a British record of 103 consecutive wins in domestic competition over a six year period. He went on to work with the Great Britain programme of the 1990s and became Head Coach of the Scottish National Team programme, a position he held for 17 years. During this time the team won 3 European Tournaments, and Thomas's ability and commitment were recognised in 1991 when he was awarded the Coach of the Year by the British Institute of Sports Coaches. In 1995 his efforts were again recognised when he was awarded Scottish Coach of the Year.

He left teaching in 2000 to take up the post of professional performance coach with the Scottish Volleyball Association. This was the first time in the history of the Scottish Game that there was a professional coach for this programme. In 2004 he was appointed as Director of Coaching for the Scottish Volleyball Association where his primary role was to update and develop the SVA's Coach Education programme. In 2006 he was interim Head Coach for Great Britain men's programme who were preparing for the London Olympics.

Thomas has a Master's Degree in sports coaching, and has delivered clinics on various topics to do with player development and team performance in a number of different countries. In 2019 Thomas was awarded an MBE by her majesty the Queen Elizabeth II for services to volleyball.

Thomas continues to coach with Su Ragazzi Volleyball Club whose women's team are currently Premier Division Champions.

"Brilliant! This book is a clear and concise exposition of the nature of volleyball and the art of coaching it. I wish I'd been able to read this when I first started coaching"

- **Bill Stobie** Scottish club coach

"It was profoundly interesting and enjoyable to read this book as it offers an insightful and refreshing take on volleyball, particularly compared to what is generally known in Estonia and Eastern Europe. Moreover, every coach and player can find many useful ideas on the philosophy of volleyball and coaching methods reading this book."

- **Andrei Ojamets** Estonian national team coach

"An interesting and informative read that will be an important reference book for coaches at all levels."

- **John Scrimgeour** Scottish national team coach

"..book provides a valuable tool for coaches and teachers not just for volleyball, but for other sports as well."

- **Ioannis Panayiotakis** Cypriot club coach

"A good read and a book that I would recommend to coaches, regardless of where they are on their coaching pathway."

- **Jefferson Williams** English national team coach

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Coaching Volleyball

The Thinking Game

Coaching Volleyball - The Thinking Game

Thomas Dowens MBE



THOMAS DOWENS MBE
with Professor John Lyle



RUTH NICHOLLS VOLLEYBALL FOUNDATION

A committed PE teacher and volleyball player, Ruth was passionate about getting young people into sport. Ruth died in April 2007 after a five-year battle against cancer.

Although Ruth grew up in a family of volleyballers with Dad Keith, and Mum Judith both international players, Ruth, and her sister Hannah, did not take up the game until their mid-teens. Starting with Whitefield in Bristol,

Ruth then went on to gain selection to the England Junior squad, captain Leeds Met and then Leeds VC in Division 1. Hannah played for Birmingham University and Norwich ladies.

Shortly after she married Chris Gorse, Ruth was diagnosed with breast cancer. Despite several major operations and repeated chemotherapy treatments Ruth remained as active as she could and carried on teaching at Morley High School Leeds until Christmas 2006.

Ruth believed that all her students should be encouraged to take part in sport no matter what their ability level. Through sport they would gain confidence, friends and improve their health. In 2014 the Gorse Academy Trust honoured her contribution to education by naming their new Academy in Leeds the Ruth Gorse Academy.

Ruth's family have carried on her philosophy of encouraging participation, through a volleyball foundation in her name helping school and junior development at grass roots level. Since 2008 hundreds of schools and clubs have received support and investments have also been made in developing sitting volleyball posts and wall sliders.

As well as equipment the sport needs coaches and teachers to lead and inspire. While there are many books, videos, and websites with information on what to coach and teach, there is a paucity of guidance on the process of developing as an effective teacher or coach of volleyball. This book seeks to fill that gap.

I have known Thomas Dowens for a very long time and have a great respect for his considered and thoughtful approach to coaching and player development. After a long career as a national coach he continues working at club level. I was delighted when he agreed to write this book and share his experience and knowledge.

The Foundation is funding this publication. The profits from sales will be covenanted to support the Scottish Volleyball Association develop and promote schools and junior volleyball development in Scotland.

Keith Nicholls
Trustee